

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as currently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-96 are currently pending. The present Amendment amends Claims 10-15, 20, 24, 25, 27-32, 37, 41, 42, 44, 46-48, 53, 57, 58, 60-62, 72, 73, 75-77, 87-92, and 95. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed application. No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, the title was objected to as not descriptive; the abstract of the disclosure was objected to because of informalities; Claims 10-96 were objected to because of informalities; Claims 10, 27, 44, 60, 75, and 90 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Haneda et al. (Japanese Patent No. 2002-040720, herein "Haneda"); Claims 11-26, 28-43, 45-59, 61-74, 76-89, and 91-96 were objected to but noted as allowable if rewritten in independent form; and Claims 1-9 were allowed. Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter in the claims.

In response to the objection to the title, Applicants amended the title to be more descriptive. Accordingly, the grounds for the objection are believed to have been overcome. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the objection to the title be withdrawn.

In response to the objection to the abstract because of informalities, the abstract is amended to correct the cited informalities. Accordingly, the grounds for the objection are believed to have been overcome. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the objection to the abstract be withdrawn.

In response to the objection to Claims 10-96 because of informalities, the cited informalities have been corrected. Specifically, in response to the assertion that the

independent claims are a single paragraph, independent Claims 10, 27, 44, 60, 75, and 90 are amended to include indentations and more clearly recite the “image transferring means” features. In response to the assertion that in Claims 13, 30, 46, 61, 76, and 91 “applicant claims ‘the other intermediate image transfer body’ which is unclear as to whether applicant is referring to the first or second intermediate transfer body,” Applicants amended the features of Claims 13, 30, 46, 61, 76, and 91 to clarify which intermediate transfer body is referred to. Finally, in response to the assertion that “said conductive roller” lacks proper antecedent basis in Claim 89, Claim 89 is amended to additionally recite “further comprising a conductive roller” to thus provide proper antecedent basis. Accordingly, the grounds for the objection are believed to have been overcome. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the objection to Claims 10-96 be withdrawn.

In response to the rejection of Claims 10, 27, 44, 60, 75, and 90 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection and traverses the rejection for the reasons set forth below.

Independent Claims 10, 27, 60, and 75 have been amended to recite:

facing rollers, respectively facing said first and second image transferring means, each is disposed in the intermediate image transfer body where the respectively faced image transferring means is not disposed.

The claim amendments find support in Figure 5 and its corresponding description in the specification. No new matter has been added.

In a non-limiting example, Figure 5 shows the first and second image transferring means 24 and 25 and the facing rollers 13 and 14. The facing rollers 13 and 14 are disposed in the intermediate image transfer body 8 in which the image transferring means 24 and 25 are not disposed. It is noted that the image

transferring means 24 and 25 are disposed in the intermediate image transfer body 20.

Turning to the applied art, Haneda shows in Figure 4 first and second image transferring means 14C (lower and upper rollers) but no facing rollers. In fact, because Haneda directly opposes the first image transferring means 14C to the second image transferring means 14C, Haneda does not need the claimed “facing rollers.”

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 10, 27, 60, and 75 and each of the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over Haneda.

Claim 44 is directed to an image forming apparatus including an image carrier and a first and a second intermediate image transfer body, and configured to transfer a toner image from said image carrier to said second intermediate image transfer body via said first intermediate image transfer body beforehand and from said second intermediate image transfer body to one surface of a recording medium, and further configured to transfer a toner image from said image carrier to said first intermediate image transfer body and from said first intermediate image transfer body to the other surface of said recording medium, including (1) first image transferring means disposed in said first intermediate image transfer body for transferring said toner image present on said first intermediate image transfer body to either one of said second intermediate image transfer body and said other surface of said recording medium, and (2) second image transferring means disposed in said first intermediate image transfer body for transferring said toner image present on said second intermediate image transfer body to said one surface of said recording medium.

The Office Action asserts at page 2 that Haneda teaches “[t]he upper transfer roller i[s] contained within the first intermediate transfer belt and the lower transfer roller is contained within the second intermediate belt” based on paragraphs 40-43 of Haneda’s translation. However, Applicants respectfully submit, as discussed in Haneda and explicitly asserted in the above citation from the Office Action, that Haneda’s upper and lower rollers are not both contained in the first intermediate belt. Haneda’s upper and lower rollers are also not both contained in the second intermediate belt. Therefore, there is no teaching or suggestion in Haneda of “*first* image transferring means *disposed in said first intermediate image transfer body*” and “*second* image transferring means *disposed in said first intermediate image transfer body*” since Haneda’s upper and lower rollers are contained in distinct intermediate belts.

Therefore, Haneda fails to teach or suggest every feature recited in Applicants’ independent Claim 44, so that Claims 44-59 are patentably distinct over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse and requests reconsideration of the rejection based on Haneda.¹

In response to the rejection of Claim 90 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection and traverses the rejection for the reasons set forth below.

Claim 90 is directed to an image forming apparatus including an image carrier and a first and a second intermediate image transfer body, and configured to transfer a toner image from said image carrier to said second intermediate image transfer body via said first intermediate image transfer body beforehand and from said second intermediate image

¹ See M.P.E.P. 2131: “A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference,” (Citations omitted) (emphasis added). See also M.P.E.P. 2143.03: “All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art.”

transfer body to one surface of a recording medium, and further configured to transfer a toner image from said image carrier to said first intermediate image transfer body and from said first intermediate image transfer body to the other surface of said recording medium, including (1) first image transferring means disposed in said second intermediate image transfer body for transferring said toner image present on said first intermediate image transfer body to said second intermediate image transfer body, (2) second image transferring means disposed in said first intermediate image transfer body for transferring the toner image present on said first intermediate image transfer body to said other surface of said recording medium, and (3) third image transferring means disposed in said first intermediate image transfer body for transferring said toner image present on said second intermediate image transfer body to said one surface of said recording medium.

As discussed above, the Office Action asserts that Haneda teaches “[t]he upper transfer roller i[s] contained within the first intermediate transfer belt and the lower transfer roller is contained within the second intermediate belt.” Applicants thus respectfully submit, as discussed in Haneda and explicitly asserted in the above citation from the Office Action, that Haneda’s upper and lower rollers are not both contained in the first intermediate belt. Haneda’s upper and lower rollers are also not both contained in the second intermediate belt. Therefore, there is no teaching or suggestion in Haneda of “*second* image transferring means *disposed in said first intermediate image transfer body*” and “*third* image transferring means *disposed in said first intermediate image transfer body*” since Haneda’s upper and lower rollers are contained in distinct intermediate belts. Further, there is no teaching or suggestion in Haneda of three image transferring means, and much less of any configuration having one of the three image transferring means in a first location and the remaining two together in a second location.

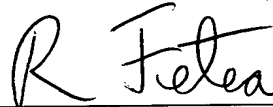
Therefore, Haneda fails to teach or suggest every feature recited in Applicants' independent Claim 90, so that Claims 90-96 are patentably distinct over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse and requests reconsideration of the rejection based on Haneda.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-96 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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